

Malaysia To Deploy RMAF Assets To Help Indonesia Put Out Forest Fires
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 8 (Bernama) -- The Defence Ministry will deploy Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) assets to Indonesia as early as Thursday to help put out the forest fires in the country that are causing transboundary haze.

Its minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the assistance, together with the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA), would be deployed to the forest areas around Palembang and South Sumatra.

"We will send Bombardier CL415MP amphibious aircraft for this mission to Indonesia.

"The Malaysian team with Bombardier aircraft is ready to fly to the country this evening, depending on the coordination with Indonesia," he told reporters after attending the National Service Training Programme (PLKN) Transformation Coordination meeting here, Thursday.

Hishammuddin said a Bombardier aircraft was capable of dropping 6,137 litres of water in 12 seconds when flying at a speed of 130km per hour in the target area determined by the Indonesian authorities.

For now, Hishammuddin said Indonesia had asked for an aircraft which is capable of fighting fires in large areas.

On a separate issue, Hishammuddin, who is also UMNO vice-president, slammed certain parties which are trying to distort the statement by Malay Rulers on 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) calling for the investigation to be accelerated.

He said it was a recommendation by the Malay Rulers to the government which all this while has been emphasising on the investigation either at the top leadership level or the Cabinet.

"It (the investigation into 1MDB) is not new...we are investigating from an early stage and any wrongdoing will not be spared," he said.

Meanwhile, in JAKARTA, Indonesia had asked four countries including Malaysia for help to fight forest and plantation fires.

Local online news portals quoted President Joko Widodo as saying today that Indonesia had contacted the Malaysian, Singaporean, Russian and Japanese governments for help to fight fires especially in peatland areas, which are difficult to put out completely.

Indonesia's president, better known as Jokowi, said the kind of assistance needed were aircraft that could carry 12 to 15 tonnes of water.

"There are three aircraft from Singapore, and Russia as well. What we need now are aircraft that can carry 12 to 15 tonnes of water, not like the two to three tonnes we have now," he said.

According to Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Department, the air quality in Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan capital has hit very hazardous level with Air Pollutant Index (API) readings between 700 and 1,000 from 10am to 2pm.

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